

JDAM Program Office Named Best in Air Force

JAKE SWINSON

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. (AFP) — The Joint Direct Attack Munitions Systems Program Office here won the 1999 Gen. Bernard A. Schriever Award as the best Program Executive Office program in the Air Force.

The award is based on an evaluation of customer focus, management and analysis, human resource development and management, long-range strategic planning, and customer satisfaction. A PEO program is a top priority in which the director reports directly to a Program Executive in the Pentagon, bypassing levels of command.

The JDAM SPO is small for managing a multibillion dollar program — consisting of 36 military, civil service, and contractor personnel. Traditionally, programs the size of JDAM have been managed by SPOs having more than 150 people.

Oscar Soler, JDAM program director, said this organization's size is one of its strengths when coupled with acquisition reform measures and commercial business practices.

"All my people are multi-talented and can do more than one job," Soler said. "When I travel, I don't worry about what is going on in the SPO back at Eglin [Air Force Base, Fla.]. I know they can handle whatever comes along. Boeing Corporation, our prime contractor, also has superb men and women [who] we consider a vital part of our JDAM Team."

During the recent Kosovo campaign, the JDAM team was called on by top defense officials to accelerate production of the 2000-pound, Global Positioning System-guided weapon. The program began in 1994, but was already in low-rate production when the Kosovo campaign began.

There were not many JDAMs in the inventory, but suddenly it became the "weapon of choice" by com-

bat aircrews. Its accuracy and adverse weather capability put it in great demand by aircrews flying night missions in the bad weather of the Balkans.

When the request to accelerate production reached Eglin, the JDAM team achieved an unparalleled feat in government contracting.

"After we got the word to accelerate deliveries and increase the quantity," Soler said, "we completed a contract in nine hours with Boeing to ramp up and produce more JDAMs. This normally takes 90 days."

JDAM was the first bomb dropped in the Balkan campaign. B-2 bombers loaded with JDAMs were flying 30-hour round-trip combat missions from Whiteman AFB, Mo. The weapons were being used as fast as they came off the Boeing assembly line, and by the time the war ended, 652 JDAMs had been dropped.

"The feedback we received from our customers, the warfighters, was that it was even more reliable and accurate than they expected," Soler said. "They were extremely pleased with its performance."

According to Roy Handsel, a contractor on the JDAM team, competition for the Gen. Benard Schriever Award is rigorous.

"Approximately 40 major PEO programs vie for the honor, and we are proud to bring it to Eglin," he said.

"I am very proud of the men and women of JDAM," Soler added. "When you consider we were competing with such programs as the F-22, C-17, AMRAAM, and Airborne Laser it is quite a tribute. I am extremely pleased."

Editor's Note: Swinson is with the Office of Public Affairs, Air Armament Center. This information is in the public domain at <http://www.af.mil/news>.